World Chronicle

UNITED NATIONS

PROGRAMME: No. 777 recorded 10 February 2000

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United Nations

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EXPO 2000

Between June and October, Hanover, Germany will be site of Expo 2000. This will be the largest international exposition ever held. The United Nations pavilion at the exposition will be dramatic, dynamic and interactive, utilizing state-of-the-world technology to document the work of the UN system. Forty million visitors are expected to come to Hanover for EXPO 2000. In this edition of **World Chronicle,** Nadine Hack, United Nations Commissioner-General for EXPO 2000, talks about the UN participation on this prestigious international event.

WORLD CHRONICLE is produced by the Media Division, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Duration: 28:00"
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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues.

Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

Between June and October, the city of Hanover in Germany will host EXPO 2000, the largest international exposition ever held. More than 200 countries will take part in this millennium event. The EXPO 2000's theme will be "Humankind, Nature and Technology". The United Nations, which has a long history of active participation in international expositions, will also be in Hanover. A grant of three million dollars which will cover the United Nations' costs for EXPO 2000 is coming from German corporations, including Volkswagen, RWE, Deutsche Telekom and the Association of German Public Sector Banks.

To coordinate UN participation at this fair, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Nadine B. Hack as United Nations' Commissioner-General for EXPO 2000. Ms. Hack, formerly New York City Commissioner for the United Nations, has been a leader in strategic planning, policy analysis and project implementation for over 25 years. Joining me to talk with Ms. Hack are Judy Lessing of *Radio New Zealand* and Tuyet Nguyen of the *German Press Agency/DPA*.

Ms. Hack, welcome to **World Chronicle.**

HACK: Thank you.

LITTLEJOHNS: Nadine, this is going to be a sort of a combination of Disneyland and Disney World and Euro Disney all rolled into one -- huge exhibition, exposition in Hanover -- and I'm sure corporations will be spending millions, hundreds of millions at any rate, perhaps or scores of millions in dollars and marks, and so on, on the various pavilions. The three million dollars or whatever it is that the United Nations has to spend is rather a modest amount, what can you do with that and how can you attract interest in the UN when there is so much competition from all these other exhibits?

HACK: You have actually hit exactly on the mark, Michael, and it's something that we've talked about at great length -- how to create a pavilion that is at the same time extremely substantive, conveying the huge amount of content about what the United Nations system is doing globally and at the same time being entertaining, stimulating, exciting, so that it captures people's imagination. And fortunately we have a terrific, terrific team. Jan Ralph, who is the Technical Director, and Luis Sarda, who is the Artistic Director, have collaborated

many times before on award-winning pavilions for the United Nations at expos. And so they really have kind of mastered that art combining substance and style. That's part one in answer to your question.

LITTLEJOHNS: The emphasis is going to be mainly on videos or are you going to have a whole bunch of videos running all the time?

HACK: The entire thing is very interactive, very visually exciting video footage, but. Have you ever been to Sony Wonderland and, you know, you go through these tunnels....

LITTLEJOHNS: I know about it but I have not been there.

HACK: ..... and they have projections coming from above and below and on the walls? And we're designing the pavilion in that way.

LITTLEJOHNS: You're going to do that? That's very expensive stuff.

HACK: However, this is the wonderful thing. We've pulled together an extraordinary production team of people at the top of their form from all around the world and they are all working right now in collaboration based out of a design studio in Madrid. And they are the best architects, the best designers, the best audiovisual people – the types of people who create the state-of-the-art digital television commercials that are shown at half-time of the football game and would cost a corporate client two million dollars for the 30-second slot. They are so excited about having an opportunity to work on the UN pavilion that they're essentially giving us deeply discounted costs for their work.

LITTLEJOHNS: To show their support for the UN?

HACK: To show their support which is really wonderful.

LITTLEJOHNS: That's great. That's great.

HACK: So in addition to having the four primary sponsors we're also getting a lot of support sponsorship. So I think we're leveraging the three million dollars to become a much larger budget in terms of what we'll be able to present to the public.

LITTLEJOHNS: Now these primary sponsors, do they volunteer the funds or did you hit ....

HACK: It was a combination. The German government has very carefully and thoughtfully established an Expo Authority and part of their job is to identify German corporations some of whom are sponsors and underwriters for the entire Expo and some of whom adopt specific pavilions. And so it was with the help of the Ministry of Economic

Cooperation in Germany that we identify these various companies who signed on and agreed to become sponsors of the UN pavilion.

LESSING: Placement is everything?

HACK: Placement is everything.

LESSING: So where is the UN pavilion? Is it tucked away in some nice little old corner where the good things are?

HACK: This is so perfect. You have no idea what a softball you just threw me because in fact they could not have placed us in a better spot. The main entrance that leads directly on to the central Expo plaza is flanked by two buildings -- the German government Pavilion and the United Nations Pavilion. As soon as you come through the ticket booth there you are in the main Expo plaza where they will have daily, during the day, flag raising ceremonies and concerts and all kinds of activities and at night they will have fireworks. That's exactly where we are. So the UN pavilion is just so perfectly situated. And they estimate, based on prior Expos, that anywhere from 40 to 50 million visitors will attend EXPO 2000 and we're hoping that a good number of those will come right in to the UN pavilion.

LESSING: You talked about the video side and the interactive side. At other world expos national governments have had entertainment. They might have their philharmonic orchestras, ballets, folk singers, you name it. What's the UN going to do? It's fine to have lots of video and high tech but what about people?

HACK: Right. Well, there's a couple of parts to answer your question. Number one, in addition to our pavilion, and not only us but every other pavilion has access. The Expo 30 has created ten stages throughout the Expo Centre and if I could take a minute to describe the Expo Centre itself, it's built on the foundation of the existing Trade Fair Centre in Hanover, which is the largest trade fair centre in the world. And so right in the centre you have the existing Hanover trade fair site with scores of buildings. There are now east of that and west of that building entirely new construction, and placed strategically among all those acres where they have gondolas to take you around -- they have buses and shuttles to take you around -- there's walking paths and bridges to take you around. There are ten stages and each pavilion can reserve the stage for an hour, two hours, three hours. There's also auditoriums. And so in addition to our ongoing daily exhibit within the pavilion, we are working with each of the specialized agencies. And so we'll have a day that features UNICEF; the work that they UN does on behalf of children; we'll have a day that features

UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme, the work that the United Nations does on behalf of the environment. And we're planning concerts and performances and we're planning to bring in the various UN goodwill ambassadors who are very well known figures. Even within our pavilion the voices who will be conducting the tours -- and it will all be in English, German, French and Spanish -- we're choosing those goodwill ambassadors. For example in Germany Steffi Graf, the tennis player, is one of their goodwill ambassadors and so she'll be saying the text in German and Danny Glover may be saying the text in English. And so there will also be visuals of these people and we hope to have them participating at different days. Of course, the Secretary-General will visit one day and that will be UN Day, and there will be a lot of special activities. So there's going to be a lot of celebratory activities in addition to the ongoing permanent exhibit.

NGUYEN: The theme for the UN Pavilion is "The UN Works for You", can you explain how do you carry out the theme?

HACK: Sure. Well, actually the theme for the pavilion is the exact same theme as the theme of the overall expo. The theme is going to be humankind, nature and technology. And we've constructed it in a wonderfully beautiful way. If you know what a chambered nautilus is, it's a shell, and when you slice it halfway it's beautifully geometrically equal shapes all in this wonderful cylindrical form. And the architects have come up with this just beautiful design of three overlapping chambered nautiluses so the whole thing just keeps bringing you in spiralling. And you come through a nature component and you come through a technology component, you come through a humankind component and it all ends up in the centre in an interactive centre which is under a magnificent 10-metre by 10-metre skylight that throws a wonderful ambient light down on it. What we're working on, in answer to your question, is to make certain that this is not a one-shot deal. The Secretary-General has announced that "The UN Works for You" is the theme of the millennium year campaign of the United Nations system and culminating in the Millennium Assembly. We wanted to make very clear that the exhibition for EXPO was within the theme that the Secretary-General is trying to promote and that all the agencies are being asked to promote "The UN Works for You". And so we're trying to translate the kind of mind-numbing figures -- X tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people don't have water -- we're trying to translate it down to very human stories. All the graphics, all the text, all the exhibition will be on a very individualized personal -- here is a woman, here's the bucket she has to carry

four miles to get water for her children. A pregnant woman. Can you imagine if you were pregnant having to walk four miles to get water? And just bring it down to a level. And by having celebrities who people know who are involved in the UN saying, "this is how I'm helping them do it" somehow more personalizes the bigger issues that the UN is working on.

NGUYEN: Is there an estimate how many visitors you will have based on previous Expos where the UN was? Like in Taejon, in South Korea a few years ago the UN had a pavilion, how many did you have then and how many do you expect in this coming Expo?

HACK: In the Taejon exhibit for example and in the Lisbon exhibit they had about 20,000 visitors a day and I believe that we'll have at least that many. And the pavilion has been constructed in a way to move people quickly because several of the other pavilions had very, very long lines where before you could get into a pavilion you had to wait for hours. And again, as I say, this is why we're fortunate to have a team who have collaborated on 12 expos and creating pavilions so that instead of them being in a position of saying "Oh my God we didn't think about that" they've already have their "oh my God" experiences. They already know the kinds of technical issues you need to think about of crowd control, movement control, what portion of the budget you need to save at the end to dismantle and ship the pieces back.

NGUYEN: Have you had any difficulty dealing with the German government? You know, years ago you were involved in negotiating the move – because Germany wanted some UN agencies to be based in Germany. They didn't have any UN agency but this time they have a UN Pavilion. I wonder if, based on your experience in the past and what you're doing now, whether you had any difficulties dealing with Germany and the government there?

HACK: No. I have to say actually it's been wonderful. I've had nothing but positive experience. Before I went over there I had been dealing with Ambassadors Kastrup and Ambassador Schumacher, the Permanent Representative and the Deputy Permanent Representative, the two senior ambassadors from Germany to the United Nations who they both and their entire staffs have been nothing but gracious and supportive. And when I went there I had the opportunity to meet with the Chief of the Expo Task Force from the Federal Chancellor's office, from the Foreign Ministry, from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and really everybody made their full staffs available. Prior to my going over there, there were some issues that had not been resolved and we just had very smooth negotiations and

discussions and we were able to clarify everything to everybody's comfort and happiness.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is **World Chronicle**. Our guest is Nadine B. Hack, United Nations Commissioner-General for EXPO 2000.

Nadine, as we all know there are always people who can find something to criticize and you have mentioned, for example, the fact that in developing countries women, or anyone for that matter, may have to walk miles for a pail of water.

HACK: Right.

LITTLEJOHNS: Have you encountered any suggestions or any criticism, any thought that perhaps the three million dollars that these German corporations are generously contributing to the UN might be spent more productively to alleviate the kind of thing you mentioned?

HACK: That certainly is a legitimate question but in fact in this case it's been quite the contrary the response. One of the things that I did early on as soon as the Secretary-General appointed me was I sent a letter out and the letter went to about 300 different people within the UN system. This was all the heads of the specialized agencies, this was all the public affairs directors, this was all the special field officers. It went to all of the directors of the UN Information Centres globally. I also sent a comparable letter to all 188 of the permanent representatives, the ambassadors from the countries, asking them if there were any special UN projects in their country that they'd like to see highlighted. And in fact the response has been overwhelmingly positive. They have been so appreciative that this time, more so than in other years, they've really been asked to give their input. We have solicited from them boxes and boxes of film footage and transparencies and slides and text content about the programmes that they're doing and they're all feeling particularly excited that a large universe of people, probably a larger universe than would ordinarily be exposed to it, can learn about their projects. And as I mentioned, in the very centre of the pavilion there will be an interactive site with 20 computers where people can actually log on. Once they have gone through the exhibit and seen this kind of, as I was mentioning to you, a kind of simple straightforward description of the programme to the degree that they are interested in finding out more someone can log on to these computers and delve deeper and deeper. They can search it by region of the world, they can search it by problem, they can search it by issue that's being explored and find out more and more information. We expect that a lot of students will come and find out. And in fact on the way out, in addition to having a gift

shop we're going to have a sign-up booth for people to become volunteers within the UN system. We're going to have a contribution place where people can make contributions to the UN. And one of the things – since a large number of the visitors to the Expo will in fact be German citizens – based on prior Expos they speculate that probably close to 70 percent of the visitors will be German citizens.

LITTLEJOHNS: Of course three million dollars is not a huge amount of money right?

HACK: It's not.

LITTLEJOHNS: I don't know how many pails of water it would purchase but the United States I gather is not going to be participating in EXPO 2000 because it would require about 40 million to have a pavilion. As an American does that disturb you that the United States is not going to be involved?

HACK: I have to say I was quite surprised when I was in Hanover to learn that the United States had not yet made a decision to participate and since I've returned from Hanover I think that they have taken the decision even further that they are definitely not going to participate. I don't know if that's final. I haven't spoken directly with them. Personally I do think that's a mistake. Personally I do think that the United States should be present.

LITTLEJOHNS: To your knowledge would this be the first time the United States has not been involved in something of this kind?

HACK: There's a history to this and Judy was alluding to this a bit earlier when we were chatting. There's a history where the United States Congress passed legislation that no – at one point after a bad experience that there couldn't be participation in world expos. And then they modified that legislation to say there could be participation as long as all the funding was private funding and there was no government funding, which by the way is exactly the same situation for the United Nations. The United Nations only participates on the grounds that no UN funds are spent for this and not one penny from the UN budget goes into this Expo.

LESSING: Well just to pick not so much the lack of the American pavilion but I'd like to go back a little bit in history because so much of the information I've read about this world expo is leaning on material that came out of the Rio Earth Summit. It's 1992. Some of the developments that have come out since then it was thought that Agenda 21, which was

the big blueprint document, was not particularly business friendly and yet the UN has become increasingly over the years friendly to business. I don't mean sponsoring it I just mean there's been much more of a partnership. Will that be reflected in the UN Pavilion as I'm sure it's going to be in other parts?

HACK: Very much so. I think that even within the environmental movement, if you have followed it, the whole concept of sustainable development as it's been growing and morphing over recent years has gone from that kind of adversarial position between the traditional environmentalist and the traditional business concerns viewing each other as enemies and has become much more a collaborative and, in both cases, self-enlightened self-interest recognizing that unless you have the kind of tripartite participation of government, business and civil society it's to nobody's benefit. That if you deplete all the resources businesses cannot sustain their businesses in a region. And so I think that that's changed. I think that the thrust of Capacity 21 and sustainable development is no longer an anathema theme to companies. I think that more and more particularly global companies are recognizing that it's to their own self-interest to participate in issues that deal with sustainable development.

LESSING: Is that reflected in some of the sponsorship that the UN has got from German companies do you think?

HACK: Do you mean the particular companies that--

LESSING: Yes. I mean--

HACK: Well, for example, one of the four sponsors that Michael mentioned earlier was RWE and most viewers would not know RWE is the largest energy consortium in Germany. It's the consortium of all the energy companies. And so when I met with the head of RWE I asked him point blank, you know, beside the traditional energy sources is your company now exploring alternative energies. And we had a lengthy discussion about exactly that. Yes, they are and they look at this as an opportunity to highlight that.

LESSING: So that's what's in it for them.

NGUYEN: Nadine, you were Commissioner for the Diplomatic Corps in New York from 1992 to 1994. It was a time also of a lot of, you know, protests by the diplomatic corps against the host country. Can you really give us your view on how the US is handling the diplomatic corps in New York City and the UN and the fact that the US is not really going to take part in the Expo. What is the US doing to the international community?

HACK: Again, I have to clarify I'm not here as a spokesperson of the US government. I happen to be a US citizen. I'm here as a spokesperson, as the UN Commissioner-General for Expo so I'm not wearing my US hat. And I can--

LITTLEJOHNS: But you could speak about your experience as a Commissioner?

HACK: I can certainly do that. And my experience -- when I stepped into the post it happened to be at a time when the feeling about the UN was actually on a positive rise both from the host country perspective and the host--

LITTLEJOHNS: That was when David Dinkins was the mayor?

HACK: When David Dinkins was the mayor. It was after we had mayors and ambassadors who said let's wave goodbye to the UN down the East River. It was post that period.

LITTLEJOHNS: That was Ed Koch who was talking about the UN as a cesspool I think he said.

HACK: You said it, not I.

LITTLEJOHNS: No he said it.

HACK: That's right. I think there was a great optimism at that time that perhaps the UN could finally step up to the global role that everyone had anticipated at its creation. It was just approaching the 50th anniversary year. I did quite a bit of work in preparation for that. The 50th anniversary year happened after I stepped down but I worked extremely closely with the host country division at the US Mission and I also worked extremely closely with the United Nations Committee on Relations with the Host Country. So there was a lot of mutual collaboration to try to improve those situations. I can't really comment on how that's being handled now because I'm not there and I don't know the answers to that. But certainly in my private citizen hat I do plan to speak to people at the US Mission and encourage them to participate in some meaningful way in this Expo and other international activities because I believe it's only to the United States' benefit.

NGUYEN: If the UN can deal with three million dollars in Hanover can the US do the same thing with three million dollars?

HACK: I think so. I mean I think the fact that they stopped because they couldn't raise 40 million dollars – I don't think they need 40 million dollars to mount a wonderful pavilion. I know that they once had a bad experience of not mounting an adequate enough pavilion and were disappointed that the press covered, you know, how

come you walk into this big hall and it looked like an empty hall and why didn't the US do better. And so maybe--

LITTLEJOHNS: That was the one in Lisbon was it?

HACK: You know I'm not sure. I think it might have been Sevilla. I think so. I'm not sure which one. But I know that they took some heat and that they may be a little bit gun shy from that experience. But I would certainly advise to whomever is making the decision that you can come up with a wonderfully substantive, exciting, creative, visually interesting for far less than 40 million.

LITTLEJOHNS: Well, it's a bit late in the day now isn't it? After all the show gets on the road in June.

HACK: It is quite late in the day but you know we only began working on the UN Pavilion a few months ago. The UN is also a bit late in the day and this is something that I'd like to advise for the future that they start much earlier because there's wonderful opportunity.

LITTLEJOHNS: We've got about a minute left Judy.

LESSING: Well bottom line this just seems to me to be a very nice thing for the UN to do, a PR exercise. Is there more to it?

HACK: The wonderful news is we've planned to make the exhibitions -- I thought why put all these resources into something that's a one-time shot. Five months. We're creating each component of the exhibit in a way that it can be moved and used afterwards. So, for example, that centre interactive piece will be moved back to the Visitors Lobby and be part of a permanent exhibition. Another section of it will be used in Bonn, Germany and we're looking for other sites around the world so that the entire exhibit can continue and have a longer shelf life than the five months of Expo.

LITTLEJOHNS: Of course Germany is eager to become a permanent member of the Security Council so I suppose that perhaps the tremendous amount of support you're receiving from Germany and German corporations does not exclude some thought about that aspiration. But they really are being very helpful to you?

HACK: They're being terrific. It was a wonderful visit and as I say the people who are working on it back here have just been supportive.

LITTLEJOHNS: That's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**.

Our guest has been Nadine B. Hack, United Nations Commissioner-General for EXPO 2000. She was interviewed by Judy Lessing of *Radio New Zealand* and Tuyet Nguyen of the *German Press Agency/DPA*.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with for the next edition of **World Chronicle**.

ANNOUNCER: Transcripts of the programme may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to **World Chronicle**, United Nations, Room S-827L, New York, N.Y., 10017.

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